

**Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on
Thursday 8th December 2022**

In St James Church Rooms, Pottergate, Alnwick at 6.30pm

- Present** Cllrs Broom, Castle, Coghill-Marshall, Edge, Harrington, Hewison, Humphries, Lyford, Parker, Swinbank, Symmonds, G Watson, D Watson and Wearn.
- In attendance** P Hately, Town Clerk; J Pibworth, Assistant Town Clerk; T Kirton, Project & Funding Officer; J Coltman, Communications Officer; Ian McRae, Gallery Youth.
- C22/93 Questions from the public**
None.
- C22/94 Apologies for absence**
Councillors Allcroft and Sugden.
- C22/95 Declarations of Interest**
Councillors Castle and Swinbank declared a non-pecuniary interest in County Council matters. Councillors Lyford and Wearn declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 4. Gallery Youth funding request.
Councillor Wearn left the meeting.
- C22/93 Gallery Youth Project funding request – Ian McRae (IM)**
Councillor G Watson advised Gallery Youth were requesting financial support of £10k.
Ian McRae explained the need was due in part to Gallery Youth not being able to apply for further grant funding until some secured grants had been spent, which Covid had impacted on.
Councillors discussed that request, and the types of support Gallery Youth provided, and who would offer these if funding was not provided.
Councillors were concerned that this was the 2nd time Gallery Youth had been in need of urgent financial support from the Town Council. Concern was raised about the exact numbers of people the Gallery Youth supported and felt that Gallery Youth needed to work in partnership with other organisations to delivery their projects.
Councillor Swinbank asked when the funding was needed. The Town Clerk advised it was needed in January 2023.
Councillor agreed to give £10k with a request that detailed expenditure was provided by Gallery Youth then a decision taken about the items which would be supported made by the Town Clerk and Mayor.
RESOLVED: To fund Gallery Youth £10k and for the Town Clerk, and Mayor to agree the items to be funded.
Councillor Wearn re-joined the meeting.
- C22/94 Approval of Minutes of the Last meetings**
The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 10th November 2022 were tabled for approval.
RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the Full Council meeting on November 10th 2022.
- C22/95 Matters Arising**
None.

C22/96 Mayors Report

The Mayor gave a verbal update on the activities he had undertaken since the last meeting. Details can be read on the Town Council's website under News.

He thanked the Assistant Town Clerk for organising Remembrance Sunday and reported that £585.65 had been collected for the British Legion.

He also thanked the Christmas Lights committee for their hard work.

C22/97 Updates:

a) County Council

Councillor Swinbank reported that there was an on-line consultation for NCC budget priorities.

He reported that a planning application was being submitted to double the size of the car park on the former DCHS site in Howling Lane.

He advised NCC want to have a number of projects in Alnwick to celebrate the life of Queen Elizabeth II. These might include tree planting, benches and interpretation boards and sites could include the old cricket field and Sycamore Avenue.

Councillors were advised to email suggestions to the Town Clerk.

Councillor Castle reported that the zebra crossing in Victoria Terrace had not yet had a safety audit. He explained that the pavement did not belong to NCC so bollards might be needed to stop people crossing the pavement to park outside the Co-Op. The safety audit will make recommendations.

Councillor Castel also advised he had written to the Minister of Transport expressing his disappointment at the news that the A1 dualling had been postponed.

Councillor Symmonds felt that a Queen Elizabeth project was already in place as the Thomas Percy site could be used and renamed. Councillor Swinbank advised that sites might need to have an official name.

Councillor Coghill-Marshall thought that the dualling of the A1 funding had only been promised for 5 years.

b) Advisory Groups:

Retail & Town Centre

Councillor Harrington reported that, as part of the Story Fest event in February 2023, writers Ann Cleaves and L J Ross would be attending. He advised that the idea was to make it an annual event.

He reported that the plan was to have the 'screen' project in place for Easter 2023, funded by S106 or Alnwick Partnership money.

Sustainable Travel

Councillor Swinbank reported the Richard McKenzie (RM), from NCC, would present on the proposed 20-mph zone at Full Council meeting in January 2023. RM would also present, in a Private session to Full Council, the outcome of the Bondgate Tower study, which the Sustainable Travel group had discussed.

He reported that the Alnwick Greenway lease is being finalised and that 20 people had signed up to the project at the Alnwick Forum event in November.

He advised that the group was also reviewing car park signage around the town, and produced a drop kerb report which was ready to go to NCC.

Housing

Councillor Lyford requested approval to ringfence £4k towards the consultancy costs for community led housing projects.

RESOLVED: To ringfence £4k, from the Alnwick Partnership budget, towards consultancy costs for community led housing projects.

C22/98 Minutes of Committees

Minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee Meeting (17th November 2022) were tabled to be received.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Recreation & Amenities Committee meeting held on 17th November 2022 were received.

Minutes of the Planning, Highways & Transport Committee Meeting (24th November 2022) were tabled to be received.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Planning, Highways & Transport Committee meeting held on 24th November 2022 were received.

Minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee Meeting (1st December 2022) were tabled to be received.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Planning, Highways & Transport Committee meeting held on 1st December 2022 were received.

C22/99 Financial Matters

a) Payments

The following invoices had been received and payments are due:

| Name | Amount | VAT | Description |
|--|---------------|------------|--------------------------------------|
| James N McLean | £205.14 | £34.19 | New compressor and materials |
| Team Valley Webdesign | 612.00 | 102.00 | Annual web hosting |
| Three-16 Productions | 600.00 | 100.00 | PA System for Remembrance Sunday |
| DNH Alnwick St Paul | 300.00 | 0.00 | Church fee for Remembrance Sunday |
| Town & Country Tree Surg Ltd | 4,740.00 | 790.00 | Tree works |
| Agilico Workplace Technologies (North) Ltd | 17.71 | 2.95 | Monthly copying charges |
| Davidson & Son | 43.12 | 7.19 | Materials and PPE |
| Locality | 600.00 | 100.00 | Annual membership fee |
| Northumberland County Council | 5,690.41 | 948.40 | Annual fee for extra toilet cleaning |
| Loyal Company of Town Criers | 25.00 | 0.00 | Annual Town Crier subscription |
| Royal Band of the Regiment of Fusiliers | 250.00 | 0.00 | Donation for Remembrance Sunday |
| Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal | 50.00 | 0.00 | Donation for Remembrance Sunday |
| J PIBWORTH (Nisbets) | 101.86 | 16.97 | Materials for Civic Events |
| J PIBWORTH (Dobbies) | 86.97 | 14.50 | Materials for Remembrance Sunday |
| J PIBWORTH (W H Smith) | 26.49 | 4.42 | Stationery |

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| Moira and David Archer | 19.73 | 0.00 | Ukrainian repayment |
| Alnwick & District Sports Council | 500.00 | 0.00 | Event grant 2022 |
| Alnwick Story Fest Community Interest | 2500.00 | 0.00 | Event grant 2022 |
| Alnwick Music Society | 500.00 | 0.00 | Event grant 2022 |
| Alnwick Playhouse | 1000.00 | 0.00 | Warm Spaces support grant |
| Mind & Sole C.I.C. | 1000.00 | 0.00 | Warm Spaces support grant |
| Alnwick Youth Hostel | 800.00 | 0.00 | Warm Spaces support grant |
| TOTAL PAYMENTS | £19,668.43 | £2,120.62 | |

Councillor Symmonds felt a donation should be made to St Michael's church for the Civic Carol Service.

Councillor Harrington said he had assumed there would be a reduction in the charge for additional toilet cleansing as the toilets had been closed for several weeks whilst works were undertaken. The Assistant Town Clerk advised she would be requesting a reduction in the NCC invoice for toilet cleansing.

The Town Clerk advised he had spoken to Bob Hodgson at NCC about the toilet cleansing SLA.

Councillor Hewison reported that the toilet doors had been wedged open with heat being lost.

The following invoices are paid by direct debit & were reported for information:

| Name | Amount | VAT Element | Description |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|---------------------------------------|
| BT DD | 75.70 | 12.62 | Monthly telephone charges (Cemetery) |
| Barclays Bank DD | 14.20 | 0.00 | Bank Charges |
| Anglian Water | 8.28 | 0.00 | Water charges for Cemetery |
| Anglian Water | 254.34 | 0.00 | Water charges for Allotments |
| Anglian Water | 14.35 | 0.00 | Water charges for Robertsons Fountain |
| British Gas DD | 30.90 | 0.00 | Monthly gas contract |
| BT DD | 92.54 | 15.42 | Telephone charges (Greenwell Lane) |
| Corona Energy DD | 53.32 | 2.54 | Electricity charges (Mech Inst) |
| Northumberland County Council | 12,362.36 | 5.83 | Monthly payroll |
| TOTAL DD PAYMENTS | £12,905.99 | £36.41 | |

RESOLVED: To approve the payments of £19,668.43 and note the Direct Debit payments of £12,905.99.

b) Bank Reconciliation

The Assistant to the Town Clerk had circulated the Bank Reconciliation at 30th November showing cash in the bank as £465,541.19. All transactions to date had been reconciled to the accounting system with no variances.

RESOLVED: To approve the Bank Reconciliation for November 2022.

c) Budgetary Controls

The Assistant to the Town Clerk had circulated the budgetary control reports for November 2022, showing the receipts, payments and current balances for each budget line.

C22/100 Warm Hubs

The Town Clerk reported that the following Warm Space applications had been received, reviewed and approved by himself and the Mayor. Pictures would be taken with the councillors at each warm space:

| | | |
|----------------------|--------|----------------------|
| Alnwick Playhouse | £1,000 | Councillor Humphries |
| Alnwick Youth Hostel | £800 | Councillor Symmonds |
| Mind & Sole | £1,000 | Councillor D Watson |

C22/101 Council Vacancies

The Town Clerk advised that the process of filling the vacancy starts with him infirming NCC of the vacancy. If within the next 14 days an election is not called then the vacancy can be filled by co-option.

RESOLVED: To start the process to fill the Council vacancy.

C22/102 Alnwick & Denwick Neighbourhood Plan Refresh – update

The Town Clerk explained that the initial steering group meeting for the Alnwick & Denwick Neighbourhood Plan refresh would be on December 21st at St James's Church Centre.

Two representatives of each Advisory Group would attend.

C22/103 Internal Auditor for 2023/24

The Town Clerk advised that the Town Council is required, under law, to appoint an Internal Auditor for the following financial year (2023/24). He advised that Karen Snowball had been recommended by the previous internal auditor and had shadowed him during some of the internal audit for 2021/22.

RESOLVED: To appoint Karen Snowball as Internal Auditor for 2023/24.

C22/104 Constitution and Financial Regulations

The Town Clerk explained that, for ease of use, the Constitution had been split into two documents which he had circulated to councillors.

RESOLVED: To approve the updated Constitution and Financial Regulations documents.

C22/105 Civic Carol Service

The Assistant Town Clerk advised that the Civic Carol Service would be at 6.30pm on Tuesday December 20th at St Michael's Church. The Bridge Singers would lead the singing and perform, along with pupils from St Paul's School and Gill Lyons who will play the Northumbrian Pipes. Also performing will be Viktoriia Rekun who will sing Silent Night in Ukrainian and English.

A collection will be taken in aid of the Alnwick Branch of the Royal British Legion and seasonal refreshment will be served afterwards.

C22/106 Correspondence

None.

C22/107 Any Other Urgent Business

Councillor Castle reported that gritting had started and routes were on NCC's website.

Councillor Castle explained that the Christmas Lights team needed help from the Town Council with organisational matters. Councillor Harrington felt that Alnwick Round Table may be able to offer help and the Assistant Town Clerk, offered help in her role as Alnwick in Bloom Secretary.

Councillor Wearn felt that applicants from a wider diverse group of people should be encouraged to apply for the council vacancy. She also advised that some councils also had youth councils.

Councillor Harrington felt it was important that applicants need to have relevant skills and expertise to support the Town Council and be able to attend meetings.

Councillor Wearn thought that councillor attendance could be published.

Councillor Symmonds advised the Playhouse were hoping to expand services into the town.

Meeting ended at 8.21pm